

## A Message from Indiana's Utility Consumer Counselor

Over the years, the vast majority of Hoosiers have come to expect reliable and low-cost utility services. The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) has worked hard to achieve this result and is proud of our successful advocacy on behalf of utility consumers.

There is more work to be done, however, and the OUCC is prepared to meet this challenge. Whether the issue is ensuring high quality and reliable utility service at the lowest price possible or ensuring a fair transition to a more competitive utility market, the OUCC is an ally for Indiana's consumers.

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor is committed to being an active advocate on behalf of utility consumers. I encourage you to contact us with your questions, concerns and comments regarding any utility matter. We welcome your input.

Sincerely,  
Anne E. Becker  
Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor

## Our Mission

The state agency that represents consumers with integrity and professionalism in obtaining high quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable price possible through vigorous advocacy, education and innovation.

## We want to hear from you!

If you have a question or concern regarding your electric, natural gas, telephone, water or sewer utility services, please let us know. You can contact us by phone, fax, mail, e-mail or through our Website. We will make every effort to assist you with a problem, and your feedback will help us better serve all utility consumers. We welcome your input.

## For more information...

Additional OUCC consumer publications can help you reduce your utility bills and better understand your utility services. All of our publications are available on our Website or by calling our consumer services staff toll-free.

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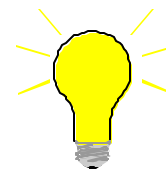
Website: [www.IN.gov/OUCC](http://www.IN.gov/OUCC)

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## Introducing Your

# Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

## The Advocate for Indiana's Utility Consumers



## What is the OUCC?

The Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) is the state agency that represents the interests of all Indiana utility consumers in matters related to:

- Electricity
- Natural gas
- Telephone services
- Water and sewage disposal services

Created by the Indiana General Assembly in 1933, the OUCC is the oldest state agency of its type in the United States. The agency's director, the Utility Consumer Counselor, is appointed by the Governor and serves a four-year term.

The agency's 57-member staff includes:

- Attorneys
- Accountants
- Economists
- Engineers
- Financial analysts
- External affairs & consumer services representatives
- Administrative personnel

## What Does the OUCC Do?

### State Regulatory Proceedings

By law, the OUCC represents the interests of all Indiana consumers - residential, commercial and industrial - in matters before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC). IURC proceedings may cover a broad range of a utility's business including its rates, service quality and service territory. State utility regulatory cases in Indiana affect more than 4 million telephone customers, 2.9 million electric customers, 1.8 million natural gas customers and nearly 1 million water and sewer customers.

The OUCC and IURC are separate state agencies with different roles. The OUCC is the consumer advocate, while the IURC is the "judge and jury." The IURC

regulates most utilities operating in Indiana. By law, certain utilities are either automatically exempt or may choose to withdraw from IURC regulation. The most notable exceptions include municipal sewer and water utilities, rural electric membership cooperatives and wireless phone companies. The utility regulatory process is a legal process, in which the IURC makes its ruling in any given case guided by applicable law and based on evidence presented by the utility, the OUCC and, in some cases, other parties that formally intervene.

In representing consumer interests before the IURC, the OUCC's attorneys and technical experts:

- Review rate requests
- Examine utility accounting and financial records
- Prepare financial studies
- Conduct engineering and legal analysis
- Inspect facilities

The information gathered from this work is filed as testimony before the IURC and used to support our recommendation of a fair and appropriate decision for consumers.

### Federal Regulatory Proceedings

The OUCC represents Indiana utility consumers in relevant cases before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

### Trial and Appellate Courts

The OUCC participates in specific cases before appellate and trial courts. Court action occurs when an IURC decision is appealed or when the OUCC finds that action needs to be taken against a utility not under the IURC's jurisdiction.

### Public Policy

The OUCC provides assistance to legislators, local government officials, federal agencies and other state agencies when issues are raised that affect utility consumer interests.

### Consumer Education

The telecommunications, natural gas and electric industries continue to evolve from a traditional, regulated monopoly environment to one that is more competitive and requires more consumer involvement. The OUCC recognizes this and provides consumers with practical information designed to assist them in understanding the changes and making informed decisions.

## The OUCC can assist you.

### Source of Information

The OUCC is committed to providing timely, useful and impartial information to consumers in order to assist them in making wise utility-related decisions. The agency offers free consumer publications on a variety of issues including "slamming" and "cramming," natural gas prices, how to understand your telephone bill and other important topics.

Our staff can answer consumer questions. We participate in various outreach events throughout the year and offer speakers to service clubs and other organizations, free of charge.

### Consumer Services Staff

If you have a problem with your electric, natural gas, telephone, water or sewer utility that you have not been able to resolve, we encourage you to contact the OUCC. Our consumer services representatives are available to assist you.

To help us resolve your utility complaint, we ask that you keep notes on all phone calls (including date, time, contact name and summary of discussion) and copies of all correspondence related to the problem and your attempts to resolve it.

Assisting consumers with utility concerns is an important part of our representation. Solving individual consumer problems provides valuable information that can help us in solving larger problems, as necessary.